

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 5-9, 11-20, and 26 are pending herein with Claims 11, 13, and 16-19 withdrawn from consideration. These claims will be re-entered upon allowance of independent Claim 1. Claims 1-10, 12, 14, 15, and 20 are rejected. Claims 3, 4, 10, and 21-25 are cancelled herein. Claim 26 is new.

The Applicant has amended independent Claims 1 and 20 with the limitation that the locking portion is "harpoon-shaped". The "harpoon-shaped" language is defined in paragraph 24 of the specification in the context of the first cutout portion 200, the elevated portion 210, and the second cutout portion 220. The language does not require that the second cutout portion 220, *i.e.*, the very end of the sidewalls and rib, have any particular shape. Rather, the end may be curved (as shown in Figs. 1 and 4), pointed, or otherwise.

Claims 1-4, 10, 12, 14, and 15 were rejected under 34 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,950,098 to Abbott, et al. The Applicant asserts that the amendments made herein overcome the rejection. Specifically, Abbott does not show a rib and the use of harpoon-shaped locking portions. The Applicant thus submits that Claim 1, and the dependent claims thereon, are patentable over the cited references.

The Applicant further asserts that dependent Claim 12 is patentable for the reasons described above and because does not show a locking portion with a cutout portion and an elevated portion. Rather, Abbott shows the use of a notch.

Claims 1-3, 5-10, 12, 14, 15, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5, 165,664 to Cluff. The Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments herein overcome the rejection of the claims. Specifically, Cluff does not show a rib

and the use of harpoon-shaped locking portions. Rather, Cluff merely shows the use of the narrow slit 42, 70. The Applicant thus submits that independent Claim 1, the dependent claims thereon, and independent Claim 20 are patentable over the cited references.

The Applicant further asserts that dependent Claim 7 is patentable for the reasons described above and because Cluff does not show a rib separating a first flat side and a second flat side. Rather, Cluff show a tube that is pinched in the middle.

The Applicant further asserts that dependent Claim 9 is patentable for the reasons described above and because Cluff does not show a first flat side terminating adjacent to the first end. Rather, Cluff show a tube that continues to the end on both sides.

The Applicant further asserts that dependent Claim 12 is patentable for the reasons described above and because Cluff does not show a locking portion with a cutout portion and an elevated portion. Rather, Cluff merely shows the use of the narrow slit 42, 70.

New Claim

Claim 26 is new. Claim 26 is similar to Claim 20 but is presented in means plus function format. As describe above, the specification describes the use of the cutout portions and the elevated portion as the locking portion.

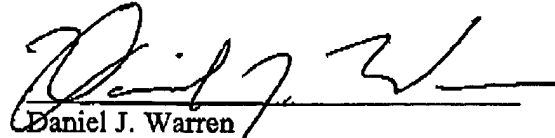
Interview

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for his time and consideration during the interview of December 13, 2004. Sample products embodying the invention herein were shown to the Examiner and possible amendments to the claims were discussed. As mentioned in the Examiner's Interview Summary, the Abbott reference and the Cluff reference were discussed. Although a further search will be required, the Examiner considered the rib limitation and the harpoon-shaped locking portion limitation to overcome the cited art.

CONCLUSION

Any questions can be directed to the undersigned at (404) 853-8028. Allowance of all claims is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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